

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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THE WIZARD OF THE CUE

OR NICK CARTER AND THE POOL ROOM CASE



BY
THE AUTHOR OF NICK CARTER

YOU MAY BE ABLE TO BEAT ME AT BILLIARDS, BUT I CAN GO YOU ONE BETTER ON A GAME LIKE THIS.

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NICK CARTER AND THE POOL ROOM CASE.

By the Author of "NICK CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

NICK CARTER BECOMES INTERESTED.

Nick Carter was sitting in the reading-room of the Adams Hotel, Boston, reading a copy of the *Boston Herald*.

He had just finished breakfast, and was taking a quiet half hour, previous to an intended departure for New York.

The day previous Nick had finished up a clever forgery case in the city, which had demanded nearly all of his attention for a week.

He had brought matters to a successful issue, as usual, and gained additional reputation as the greatest of modern detectives, and a neat little reward in the bargain.

"What is this?" he suddenly exclaimed, under his breath.

His eyes had just caught a number of flaring headlines on the page before him:

A POOL ROOM MYSTERY!

Lawrence Hasbrooke, the Well-Known Club Man, Found Dead in the Crow Pool Rooms!

Paul Pemberton Arrested on Suspicion!

A ghastly murder on State street was brought to light early yesterday morning. Lawrence Hasbrooke, well known in this city as a clubman and a great lover of fine horseflesh, was found murdered in the rear apartment of the notorious Crow Pool and Billiard Parlors.

The body was discovered by James Nelson, the colored porter for Michael Gravety, the owner of the resort. Nelson went to the establishment at half-past six o'clock to perform his usual morning work. He opened up in front, raised the curtains, and then walked to the back room to get his broom and duster from a closet situated there.

He was at first surprised to see the gas burning brightly in the rear room. This is never allowed to burn usually, the only light during the night being in front.

Hardly had Nelson noticed the light when he happened to glance at the pool table over on the left. There he saw a sight that filled him with amazement, and, if we may take his story, with absolute terror also.

On the top of the pool table lay Lawrence Hasbrooke, with a dagger sticking in his heart.

The well-known clubman had been dead several hours, if not longer. He was cold and stiff, and the blood from the wound had turned nearly the entire green cloth into a deep red.

On all sides were the evidences of a violent struggle. Three chairs were overturned and one of them was all but smashed to pieces. Lawrence Hasbrooke's clothing was torn in a dozen places, and his hands were scratched, and so, also, was his face.

Suspicious were at once directed toward Michael Gravety. But it was soon learned that he was out of town and had left the resort in charge of "Jack" Sanborn, his bar-keeper.

The officers who were hastily called in, went at once to hunt up Sanborn, but that individual soon after appeared, ready for the day's work.

Sanborn was somewhat under the influence of liquor, but when told of the crime, managed to pull himself together. It was then that he told a rather remarkable story.

He said that he had remained at the rooms until exactly twelve o'clock the night of the murder. Then he had gone to the players and told them it was time to close up.

All of the players had at once departed but Hasbrooke and Paul Pemberton, who were playing a series of games. Pemberton is also a clubman, and a bitter rivalry is known to have existed between the pair.

Both had refused to depart until the game was over. They were both worked up, and Pemberton was particularly angry because Hasbrooke had insinuated that he had cheated in counting more than he made. Both men had also been drinking.

At last Sanborn, who himself was more than half full of liquor, had said he would stay no longer. He closed up the front of the resort and fixed the spring lock on the back door.

"Now you fellows play as long as you want to," he said. "When you are done, turn out the light and come out of the back door. You can settle up to-morrow."

To this both players had agreed, and Sanborn went off, leaving them alone in the pool rooms. He has frequently left well-known customers playing after regular hours. He went home, and easily proved this by his wife and two of his neighbors.

The suspicion then naturally fell on Paul Pemberton. Pemberton has bachelor quarters on Beacon street, a fine set of apartments overlooking the river.

He was caught in bed and pretended to be fast asleep when the officers aroused him. He denied all knowledge of the crime, but his manner indicated that he was guilty.

Pemberton's story is that he became disgusted with Hasbrooke shortly after Sanborn left, and after a few more unpleasant words with Hasbrooke he followed the barkeeper out. He said when he left, Hasbrooke was moving to the front saloon to hunt up some brandy. He has no idea who committed the murder, and is inclined to believe that Hasbrooke took his own life.

The one thing which bothers the police is where the dagger came from with which the crime was committed. It is either a Spanish or Mexican weapon, and so far as known neither Pemberton nor Hasbrooke owned it. It is a long, thin blade, and on

the handle is a rude cross with a hand at the top from which the two first fingers are missing.

Pemberton has been up for examination, but he refuses to say anything until he has consulted with his lawyers. In the meanwhile the detectives are on the still hunt to obtain more evidence against him. Sanborn is also held as a witness, and the pool rooms are locked up and in charge of the police. Michael Gravety has telegraphed from New York that he will be back here to-day. The affair will undoubtedly give the Crow resort a bad name, which is hard on Gravety, who has just spent several thousands of dollars in having it refitted.

Among those at the place, while Pemberton and Hasbrooke were playing and quarreling were Hiram Otlett, of the Great Eastern Shoe Company, and Adam Brisbane, of Brisbane & Saunders, horse dealers. Both of these men have given bail to appear as witnesses whenever wanted. Otlett feels certain that Pemberton is guilty, as the young fellow was very much enraged when Hasbrooke insinuated that he was cheating. Brisbane, who is a warm personal friend of Pemberton, has very little to say. He admits that it looks black for Pemberton, but is certain his friend possessed no such dagger as the one with which Hasbrooke was murdered. It is doubtful, though, if his testimony carries much weight when Pemberton comes up for trial. All indications now are that the detectives will soon clear up the whole mystery and then Pemberton will be so hedged in by evidence against him that he will be glad enough to plead guilty and say he did the deed in self-defense, referring to the wrecked condition of the back room as evidence.

In his evidence Sanborn, the barkeeper, states that there was one stranger in the place during the evening. Who the man was

he did not learn. This stranger played one game of pool with Pemberton before Hasbrooke came in, and then, after getting some of the best imported cigars on hand, lit one and went away.

Pemberton was questioned about this stranger, but could not give his name. He said he met the man in a law office over in Blackstone street, and the two had struck up a quick and agreeable friendship. He did not know where the stranger could be found, and, much as he would like to clear himself, could not see what connection the man could have with the murder.

Later news to the *Herald* furnishes a possible clew to the murder. Hasbrooke was a married man, his wife being the daughter of Captain Blanchard Willis, of the American Yacht Club. It is said that Pemberton was Hasbrooke's rival for Miss Willis' hand, and that the hatred the two men bore for each other really dated from this rivalry. It would certainly seem a stronger motive than a mere quarrel over a game of pool or billiards.

CHAPTER II.

NICK CARTER FEELS OBLIGED TO DO SOMETHING.

A grim sort of smile played around Nick Carter's mouth as he read the foregoing account.

Not a word of what was printed escaped him. The smile became deeper when he read about the stranger whom Paul Pemberton had met in a law office on Blackstone street.

"And so they fancy the stranger might have something to do with that murder? That's good!"

When Nick had finished, he called for the other morning papers. But the accounts in the *Globe*, *Journal*, *Post* and *Advertiser* were not much different from that in the *Herald*, and he was soon done with them.

Then he lit a fresh cigar and began to puff and think—puffing and thinking harder every minute.

"That is a mystery and no mistake," he thought. "What was the motive for the crime—gain or revenge? That is a point to decide first."

Presently Nick arose and threw the end of his cigar away. He had reached a sudden determination.

He went below and straight to the telegraph desk.

Taking one of the blanks, he wrote as follows:

"A marriage keeps me here with work for the bridegroom. Perhaps I will want you to come up before I come down. N."

This strange message was directed to Chick, his first assistant.

"Send as soon as possible," he said to the clerk, and paid the charge.

The telegram gotten off, Nick went up to his room.

He spent a quarter of an hour in donning a disguise, and then came below again.

He looked like a lawyer, with his suit of black and his silk hat. In his hand he carried the regulation bag for legal papers.

He hurried down the street and crossed over to the neighborhood in which the jail is situated.

There he presented himself to the officer in charge of Paul Pemberton.

"I wish to see the prisoner," he said, and at the same time handed over an engraved card which bore the words:

VINCENT PAGE PUTNAM,
Counselor at Law.

Now, as it happened, Pemberton was awaiting a call from a lawyer, and the officer at once led Nick to the cell in which the prisoner was confined.

Paul Pemberton sat on a low bench, his face hidden in his hands.

He looked up slowly when Nick entered.

The face of the young man showed keen suffering. It was deadly pale, and there were deep black rings under his eyes.

"This may be remorse, but I very much doubt it," thought the detective.

"Your lawyer," announced the officer, and after locking Nick in with the prisoner, he resumed his station in the corridor outside.

"Why, you are not——" began Paul Pemberton, and then stopped as Nick put up a warning hand.

"No, I am not a lawyer," whispered Nick, in so low a tone that the officer could not hear what was said. "I only announced myself as one to gain admission to this cell."

"Then what are you?" asked Pemberton, in an equally low tone.

His curiosity was at once aroused.

"I am a detective."

"And what do you want of me? Are you, too, seeking a confession?"

And the young man gave a bitter little laugh.

"No, I have come to aid you."

"Thank you! But what can you do?"

"That will depend upon circumstances."

"You say you are a detective. Who are you?"

"Will you promise not to reveal my identity until my work is done if I tell you?"

"Yes."

"My name is Nick Carter."

"Do you mean to say you are the Nick Carter from New York? The world-famous detective?"

"Yes."

"Then I am doubly glad to see you, Mr. Carter. But really——"

"Well, speak out."

"How is it you come to me? We never had any dealings and ——"

"Excuse me, Pemberton, but we have been quite friendly."

And Nick smiled.

"Why, I never met you before!"

"Oh, yes, you have."

"And where? I must have forgotten completely."

"We met in the offices of Marsh & Randolph, on Blackstone street."

Paul Pemberton tried to think, and finally shook his head.

"I don't remember you."

"Don't you remember the little old lawyer with the blue spring overcoat? The same fellow who played you a game of billiards just before you started to play with Lawrence Hasbrooke?"

The prisoner stared at Nick in amazement.

"You are not that man!" he cried.

"Hush! not so loud. Yes, I am the same individual."

"But—but—and you played billiards with me and saw me start to play with Hasbrooke?"

"I did."

"I don't understand——" Pemberton broke off short. "Mr. Carter—or whatever your real name is—if you are the great detective, or no matter who you are—why were you spying upon me?"

"I wasn't spying upon you."

"But you followed me into the Crow resort."

"That is true, and we played billiards. But I only did that for the sport of the thing."

"You were in the same disguise you wore when at Marsh & Randolph's."

"I was. I had had no occasion to change my dress."

"And you were not spying upon me there?"

"No. Let me tell you something, Pemberton, just to ease your mind. You know Louis McCord, formerly clerk for Marsh & Randolph?"

"I do—quite well."

"He has been arrested for a forgery amounting to fifteen thousand dollars."

"Impossible! I treated him as a friend!"

"I know it, and that is why I watched you for a while—but before this pool room mystery came up. McCord is now under arrest and has confessed."

"Well?"

"I was just preparing to return to New York when I read about your trouble in the *Herald*."

"And now? Oh, Mr. Carter, you do not believe me guilty?"

In sudden supplication, Paul Pemberton stretched out both hands toward Nick.

"I can't say that I do."

"Thank you for that."

"There is enough work awaiting me in New York, but the fact that I had come in contact with you, and also with Hasbrooke, made me remain in Boston."

"You will endeavor to ferret out this mystery and clear me? I will pay you well. I am rich and——"

"We'll talk about pay when you are out of the woods, Pemberton."

"Then you will help me?"

"I'll go to work on the case."

The young man's face clouded.

"I see how it is; you half suspect I am guilty," he remarked, soberly.

"I haven't said so, Pemberton. But if you and Hasbrooke had a fight——"

"We had no fight. The whole row was one of words only. Neither of us laid a finger upon the other."

Nick eyed the young man sharply.

The prisoner bore the gaze unflinchingly.

"He's innocent," thought Nick.

"Tell me your story from beginning to end," he said, aloud.

"There is but little to add to the newspaper accounts."

"Is it true that you and Hasbrooke were rivals for the same young lady's hand?"

"It is true in part. But I was not very deeply struck, as the boys say. I attended the wedding, and that ended the little dream for me."

"But you and Hasbrooke were enemies?"

"He might have been my enemy, but I was not his. We were billiard and pool rivals and also rivals on the race track, but that is as far as it went. If we had been such bitter enemies as the police would have it, is it likely we would have played pool and billiards at all?"

"Not unless you had an object."

"Well, I had no object, whether he had or not."

"What time did you leave the resort?"

"About ten minutes after twelve. Sanborn had just gone."

"And where did you go?"

"Straight to my rooms on Beacon street."

"Did you meet any one on the way?"

"No one that knew me."

"Then an alibi is out of the question."

"Yes," and the prisoner drew a deep sigh.

"When you left the resort, did you close the door after you?"

"I believe I did, but I am not sure. I was too much disturbed in mind to think. I simply wanted to get away, and made up my mind that never again would I speak to Hasbrooke or play with him."

"When you went out, did you notice anybody hanging around the resort?"

"I thought I saw a man near the back of the alleyway upon which the rear door opens."

"What did he look like?"

"I can't say, for it was too dark to see. I may be mistaken, and I wouldn't swear it was a man at all."

"And the very last you saw of Hasbrooke he was searching for a bottle of brandy?"

"He was searching for something, and he called it brandy."

"The light was turned down low in the front room where the bar is?"

"Yes, Sanborn turned it down before he went out."

"Is it possible that some one might have been left in the barroom when Sanborn locked up?"

Paul Pemberton's face brightened.

"Yes, that is possible."

"But you saw no one?"

"I did not."

"Now about that dagger. Did you ever see that before?"

"Never."

"Then you have no idea where it came from?"

"I have not."

"Do you think Hasbrooke had much money with him that night?"

"He told Sanborn he hadn't a cent. The two laughed over it, and Sanborn said he would lend Hasbrooke a nickel if he was hard up."

Nick Carter was silent for a moment.

Here was a murder mystery that promised to prove a hard nut to crack.

Even the man who had been seen last with the victim, and who was now under arrest, could give no clew which might lead to the arrest of the real culprit.

"Were it not for the signs of a struggle which the papers speak of, it might be believed that Hasbrooke took his own life."

"Even as it is, Hasbrooke may have filled up on brandy, got a crazy fit on him during which he smashed the furniture and then stabbed himself."

"If that is so, he either had that dagger with him or else he found it around the pool rooms."

"I must find out more about that bit of steel before I investigate in any other direction."

CHAPTER III.

A DAGGER WITH A HISTORY.

Nick Carter continued to question Paul Pemberton a few minutes longer, but could gain nothing additional in the way of information.

Then he arose and Pemberton did the same.

"You will help me, Mr. Carter?"

"I will, Pemberton. If it is possible to clear you, I will do it."

With this promise, Nick left the jail.

His next steps were directed toward the Crow pool and billiard rooms on State street.

He found a deputy coroner in charge, but easily gained admission to the place.

Lawrence Hasbrooke's body had been removed to the morgue and placed on ice, but otherwise the rooms were in exactly the same condition as when the murder had been discovered.

Numerous local detectives had made examinations, but they had not been allowed to disturb a single thing.

With his keen eyes the great New York ferret took in every detail of the scene.

He noted the broken chair, the overturned furniture, and the broken drinking glasses strewn about.

The pool table stood several feet from the wall, which was covered with a paper of red and gold.

On the wall were several faint finger marks, also in red.

Nick examined the marks with a microscope.

The marks were of blood.

"The murderer made those," thought Nick.

His first examination of the premises had assured him that Lawrence Hasbrooke had not been a suicide.

He had struggled bravely for his life,

even if intoxicated, and had not given in until overcome by pure brute strength.

The marks on the wall interested Nick greatly, and he wondered how they had been made.

There were three marks running parallel to each other. The upper mark was a little apart from the other two.

"That looks as if a three-fingered man had made the mark—some chap who had lost his second finger," mused Nick.

The detective looked along the wall on the floor for further evidence of the man who had made the mark.

On the hard wood he saw several heavy scratches, as though some one had had a protruding nail in his shoe or boot.

The scratches led up and around the table, and they were fresh.

Nick walked to the rear door and examined the sill, but none of the scratches appeared there.

Then he went to the front door.

Here he was more successful. The scratches were there, and they led around to the end of the bar.

Nick looked down and on the under side of the wood saw more marks of red, which he rightly took to be blood.

"The murderer went out of the front door, no matter how he came in," was Nick's conclusion.

Nothing more was to be learned at the billiard and pool rooms, and Nick soon took his departure for the morgue.

The morgue keeper knew Nick personally, and readily gave the detective permission to make as much of an examination as he deemed proper.

"But what's the use, Mr. Carter?" he said. "We've got the murderer."

"Have you?" returned Nick, dryly, and there the conversation ended.

Nick knew that Hasbrooke was a big

man. As he lay there at full length the great detective could not help but notice the dead man's great muscular development.

"He was a strong fellow beyond a doubt. Paul Pemberton is comparatively small and certainly not an athlete, and that alone would prove that he could not get the better of Hasbrooke in an all-around struggle, especially for life or death.

"The man who downed Hasbrooke must have been a powerful individual—a regular bruiser.

"If I run him down, I may have a little picnic with him, if it comes to a hand-to-hand set-to."

And Nick smiled to himself at the thought.

Nick examined the dead man's hands, but found in them absolutely nothing in the shape of a clew.

He looked at Hasbrooke's shoes and saw they were perfectly smooth on the soles.

Then he asked for the dagger that had been used, and was handed the weapon, still stained with the life-blood of its victim.

"A Mexican blade beyond a doubt," thought Nick.

"That cross and the hand with the two fingers was cut on the handle by some amateur and not by a professional carver.

"Now, who owns this dagger, or where was it picked up?

"It must have been brought from Mexico by some one, but that answer covers too much ground to be of any use."

Nick continued to examine the blade, often turning his powerful microscope upon it.

Presently he made out a faint name scratched under the cross. He studied it a while and deciphered it into Juan Cross.

"Juan Cross," he murmured to himself. "That name hits the cross first-rate. But how about that hand? Was he called Two-

fingered Juan, or Cross, or something like that? and is he around Boston?"

Nick could learn nothing more from the dagger, and gave it back to the keeper of the morgue.

Then, with a final look at Hasbrooke's body, he left the place.

The name on the dagger kept appearing in his mind constantly, and this made him turn his steps to the nearest telegraph office.

The message he wrote out was even more curious than that sent before:

"A puzzle. Cross, Juan. Two fingers. Mexico maybe. Knowledge, at once.

"N. C. 89."

This curious telegram was sent to the chiefs of police of San Antonio, Phoenix, Denver, Sacramento and St. Louis.

While he was waiting for a reply, Nick went back to the jail, and changing his disguise to that of a local detective, sought and obtained an interview with Jack Sanborn, the barkeeper.

Sanborn was evidently much frightened by the prospects ahead, and he was more than willing to tell everything he knew in order to clear himself from any possible suspicion.

"You were drunk that night, Sanborn," began Nick.

"Not exactly drunk, sir," whined the barkeeper.

"You had had several glasses."

"Oh, yes. The crowd made me drink wid 'em."

"You were very careful when you locked up the front of the place?"

"I was."

"Did you leave the key in the lock?"

"Of course not; I put it in my pocket."

"Do you carry the key to the back door?"

"No; that is left in the lock."

"Who else has keys to the front door?"

"Nelson and Mr. Gravety."

"When did Mr. Gravety go to New York?"

"Monday."

"When was he coming back?"

"Not before Saturday. But I guess he's back by this time, although he ain't been to see me."

"Where was he going?"

"To see his brother, who keeps a billiard parlor in New York."

"What was the last word you heard between Hasbrooke and Pemberton when you left?"

"Pemberton didn't say nothin'. Hasbrooke told me to go to the devil, that he would play as long as he pleased, and that he would settle the next night. Then, just as I left, Hasbrooke pitched into Pemberton for what he called a wrong shot."

"And that was all you heard?"

"Yes."

"Did you see anyone hanging around the place?"

"I saw a tramp in the alley, but he skipped out as soon as he saw me."

"And you went straight home?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure, when you locked up the front of the saloon, that no one was hiding there?"

"I didn't see no one, and I took a good look around."

Nick questioned Sanborn still further, but could gain nothing of advantage.

Leaving the barkeeper, the great detective next interviewed James Nelson, the colored porter.

Nelson was even worse frightened than Sanborn.

"I didn't do dat job, boss, I declar ter goodness I didn't! Massa Hasbrooke an' me war good friends, an'——"

"Tell me just how you found the body," said Nick.

The negro at once plunged into all the details, many of which were of no consequence. It was plain to see that he had been so taken back by his discovery that he could scarcely remember what he had done.

"How late were you there in the evening?" asked Nick.

"Only till eleben o'clock, boss."

"Pemberton was then playing with Hasbrooke?"

"Yes, sah."

"Who else was there?"

As near as he could remember, Nelson made a list of eight or ten men, which Nick took down.

That was all could be gotten out of Nelson, and Nick soon left him.

On reaching the telegraph office, Nick found two telegrams awaiting him, one from Denver and the other from San Antonio.

The telegrams were so much alike that we will give but one of them—that from Denver:

"Juan Cross, known as Two-fingered Juan, Mexican gambler and horse thief. Killed in Big Buck Pass by an all-around sport from the East called Cuey, or the Wizard of the Cue, or something like that. Cuey robbed Juan of several hundred dollars in gold and disappeared."

Nick read this telegram with much interest.

"The Wizard of the Cue," he murmured to himself. "That would be a good title for some hanger-on around a billiard and pool room, such as the Crow resort."

"It is more than likely that when Cuey robbed Two-fingered Juan of his gold he also took the Mexican's dagger."

"The Wizard has given up life in the West and come East, which, according to the telegram, is his old stamping ground."

"Let me find the Wizard of the Cue and

it is more than likely I will have the murderer of Lawrence Hasbrooke."

Nick put the telegrams in his pocket and then looked over the list of names given to him by Nelson and another list he had made out himself.

"My first step must be to learn which of these players are experts," he reasoned. "To be called the Wizard of the Cue a player must be nothing short of an expert.

"And I must also find out if Hasbrooke had any enemy not generally known as such.

"They say he was fond of horses and a frequenter of the race tracks. He may have some bitter enemy in that direction."

In a quiet kind of a way Nick went to work among the men who were in the habit of spending their hours over the tables in the Crow and other resorts.

This took time, and many were the games he played to learn if any of his opponents could justly be ranked as an expert.

Nick was a first-rate player himself, and although he matched himself against seven different young men in his easy fashion, he came out on top every time.

Instead of pleasing him, however, this was only a disappointment to the great detective.

"No Wizard of the Cue there," thought Nick. "I must look farther or else admit that the dagger was used by some person who did not lay claim to that title."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK CARTER GAINS A POINT.

The coroner's jury made short work of the Lawrence Hasbrooke murder.

The inquest was held at the morgue and at the Crow resort, and inside of three hours the following verdict was rendered:

"We find that Lawrence Hasbrooke came to his death from a dagger wound in the heart, and further find that all evidence

points to Paul Pemberton as the person likely to have committed the deed."

On the strength of this verdict, Pemberton was held without bail to await further action of the authorities.

Nearly everyone in Boston believed him guilty, even his best friends shaking their heads when the sad occurrence was mentioned.

The local detectives did all in their power to bring in additional evidence against the young man.

Pemberton grew very despondent, and freely admitted it when Nick called upon him.

"It's no use," he said. "They are bound to hang me."

"Don't give up hope, Pemberton," returned Nick. "Take my word, they shall do nothing of the sort."

"Then you have discovered something?"

"Something, yes, but not much. Still, it is a clew."

"Thank Heaven! What is it?"

"I will tell you later," rejoined Nick. "I have come here to learn all you know about Hasbrooke's outside connections—about his horses and the race track, I mean."

"He owns two horses—Wildflower and Great Buzz."

"Has he any sort of a partner?"

"No, he is—but hold on—he used to have a partner, a man by the name of Lee—Gilbert Lee."

"Where is Lee now?"

"He keeps a very fine livery stable over on the other side of town."

"Did he and Hasbrooke part friends?"

"That I can't say. I know one thing, they parted rather suddenly."

"Was Lee in the habit of coming to the Crow resort?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"One question more: Is Lee a good billiard and pool player?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Never mind, answer—if you know."

"He plays pool and billiards. How good a player he is I can't say."

With this information concerning Gilbert Lee, Nick left the jail.

He changed his disguise to that of a race track sport, and early that afternoon made his way to Lee's livery stables.

"Where's Mr. Lee?" he asked of a colored hostler, in front of the place.

"In the office, sah."

So into the office Nick sauntered, in a free and easy manner.

"This is Gilbert Lee?"

"That's my name," was the short reply.

Lee was a foxy-looking individual, rather stout and a high liver.

"My name's Gus Weldon. I'm from Springfield. Come from the race tracks."

"Oh! Sit down!"

And Lee shook Nick's hand.

"I want to get a nice rig," went on Nick.

"I want a goer."

"All right; you shall have it."

"How's business in Boston?"

"Rather dull," returned Lee.

"Dull all over. Here, have a smoke?"

"Thanks."

Lee took the cigar and also the light Nick handed him. The two spoke of the rig Nick wanted, and Lee gave the necessary orders to the stable hands outside.

"By the way, it's too bad about Hasbrooke's murder," went on Nick, after a slight pause.

He was watching Lee keenly, and noticed that the livery stable keeper started slightly.

"Yes, very bad," was Lee's reply. "I never thought he would come to so untimely an end."

"I read about it in the paper," went on Nick. "They have the murderer, haven't they?"

"They arrested a man named Pemberton, but I don't think he committed the murder."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't think Pemberton is that sort of a man."

"Who do you think did it?"

Again Lee started, but instantly recovered.

"I can't say—but I'm satisfied in my mind that Pemberton ain't guilty."

"But some one must have killed the man."

"He might have committed suicide."

"Do many think that?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know much about it," went on Nick, carelessly.

"Nor I, to tell the truth. I haven't been around the Crow for several months."

At that moment one of the hands came in and said Nick's turn-out was ready for him.

"Good enough!" and the detective sprang up.

"How long do you want the rig?" asked Lee.

"Only a few hours. Want security?"

And Nick displayed a fat roll of bills.

"No, that's all right."

Lee had had his doubts about Nick, but the display of wealth eased his mind.

"I am going to meet a bit of calico and drive her out around Bunker Hill Monument," explained Nick, with a wink.

"I see. Wish you a good time," and Lee laughed.

Nick turned to leave the office. As he did so another man entered, a tall, powerful-looking individual with an unmistakable Irish face.

"Ah, how do you do, Gravety?" exclaimed Lee.

"How are you?" returned the proprietor of the Crow pool rooms. "Lee, I want a rig at once."

"A rig?"

"Yes. My Jessie is gone lame."

"I see. But what are you doing driving around? I should think that trouble at the rooms would keep you in town."

Gravety muttered an oath under his breath.

"That trouble's too bad," he said. "It will give my rooms a bad name. But hurry up with that rig."

And so saying, Gravety walked through the office into the stable.

By this time Nick was in the rig that had been brought out for him.

He took up the reins and drove off.

But once around the corner he drew up in front of a saloon and tied the horse.

"Keep an eye on my rig for a few minutes, will you, Charley?" he called to the barkeeper. "I'll see you when I come back."

"All right," was the response.

Nick sprang to the sidewalk, and making a few changes in his disguise hurried back to the livery stable office.

Something in the manner of Lee and Gravety when they were addressing each other had struck him as peculiar.

Nick gained the outside of the office just as Lee and Gravety came back from the stable.

A little side window was partly open, and by standing close to this, the detective was enabled to hear what was said inside.

"Then you haven't opened up yet?" Lee asked.

"No," returned Gravety. "What's the use? None of the young bloods would come near the place. I'm afraid I've got a black eye for keeps. And just after spending a good deal in fixing up, too."

"It's queer Hasbrooke should be killed in your place," ventured Lee, after a short pause.

"What do you mean?" blustered Gravety.

"Why, you and he were pretty bitter, weren't you?"

"No more so than Hasbrooke and yourself," retorted the proprietor of the Crow.

"Well, I heard you were."

"Who said so?"

"Fuller."

"Fuller be hanged! He don't know anything," growled Gravety.

Evidently he was much disturbed.

"You won't want to leave Sanborn in charge again," continued Lee.

"Not much! After this I'll stay at home and mind my own affairs."

"Where have you been?"

"In New York."

"Ever since you left Monday?"

"All but the time spent on the steamer—I went down and came back on the *Puritan*."

"It's funny it should happen just while you were away."

"Well, I'm glad if it had to happen that it came as it did," went on Gravety, with an uneasy little laugh.

"Why so?"

"Why, they can't lay any blame on to me. Sanborn will catch what blame there is."

"That's so. If you and Hasbrooke were out, what do you suppose brought Hasbrooke to your place?"

"Oh, I guess he knew I was away and he wanted to match cues with Pemberton. But I must be going."

With this remark, Gravety left the office and sprang into the buggy that stood ready for him.

Nick saw him drive around a corner and then hurried back to where he had left his own rig.

Impelled by a feeling he could not put into words, the detective resolved to follow the pool room keeper and see where he went.

Accordingly he procured his rig, tipped the barkeeper who had watched it, and drove off after Gravety.

The course taken by the pool room keeper was toward South Boston.

Inside of half an hour they reached a road which was as yet but scatteringly built upon.

Gravety kept on until he reached a large building situated some distance back and surrounded by a high board fence.

The gate was open, and he drove through and disappeared in the direction of a commodious stable.

Nick drove past the place and then turned into a vacant lot and tied up to a tree.

This done, he hurried back and was just in time to see Gravety entering the large stone building by a side door.

At that moment a boy came along the road and Nick asked him what the building was.

"That used to be Fuller's mill," was the urchin's reply. "But they don't run it any more."

"Why?"

"Cos Fuller follows the races now. He has fast horses, and pop says he makes more out of 'em than he ever did out of the mill."

And the boy, being in a hurry, passed on.

"This must be the Fuller Lee referred to," thought Nick.

"If that is so, what is Michael Gravety's object in calling upon him?"

"Can it be possible that Gravety has come in reference to Hasbrooke's death?"

Nick was not yet prepared to believe this, yet he was anxious to watch Gravety, and to further this desire, crept cautiously into the yard and up to the big building.

He found a window in the rear open, and was soon inside.

A murmur of voices came from overhead, and he at once passed up the stairs leading in the direction.

Soon he found himself in front of the door of a large room, and here he waited silently

for whatever might be said by the persons in the room.

CHAPTER V.

A FUNNY MISTAKE AND A FIGHT.

Two men were in the big room beyond, and the detective soon ascertained that they were Gravety and the race track man named Fuller.

Gravety was evidently angry and so was Fuller, but what about was not at first quite clear.

"You had no business to talk to Lee," stormed Gravety. "He is no friend of mine."

"And it seems you are no friend to me," retorted Fuller, bitterly. "You let me drop in those two races."

"I didn't."

"I say you did. I got it straight from Gibson, Rusher and half a dozen others."

"You are mistaken, and so are they, Fuller. I never let you drop. On the contrary, I have often tried to help you."

"Tell that to the marines."

"I swear I have."

"Well, who did let me drop, then?"

"I don't know. Maybe Hasbrooke. It was just like him."

"I don't think so."

"I do."

"You would, of course. I know the ugly feeling there was between you."

"I had a good reason to be mad," growled Gravety.

"You and Hasbrooke had a big fight, didn't you?"

"No. We had a few words, that's all."

Fuller laughed sarcastically.

"It's a good thing for you to say that—now, Gravety."

"Why?"

"It looks bad for a man if folks know he

and a man who was murdered were on the outs."

"Humph! You talk as if they might connect me with the murder!" growled Gravety, apparently much disturbed.

"Why not? It happened in your place."

"Yes, but I was in New York at the time of the murder. Don't talk nonsense, Fuller."

Fuller began to whistle to himself.

"Now what are you whistling about? You think I wasn't in New York?" demanded Gravety, in a rage.

"Did I say so?"

"Your manner implies it."

"What if it does?"

"Nothing, except that you are a fool. I was in New York and can easily prove it. Why, I never heard of the murder until the telegram was handed to me while I was at my brother's place in New York."

"When did they telegraph to you?"

"I got the telegram at half-past ten in the morning."

"And then you came right on here?"

"Of course."

Fuller was silent. Looking through a crack in the door, Nick saw him scratch his head.

"I suppose you don't even believe that," grumbled Gravety.

"I've got to believe it, if——"

"If what?"

"If you can prove you were in New York."

"I can. Why, look here, Fuller, what are you driving at? You talk as if you believe I murdered Hasbrooke. I might as well say you murdered him—you or Lee."

Fuller turned a bit pale.

"You were no friend to him," went on Gravety.

"I had nothing to do with it—never go near your place, as you know," cried Fuller, hastily.

"I don't know anything about it. Hasbrooke never came, either, when I was around."

There was a moment of silence and then the conversation turned to a horse Fuller owned.

Gravety wanted to buy the animal, but he was not willing to pay the price demanded.

The two men began to haggle, and in the midst of it another man came from the stables into the mill.

There was not time for Nick to get out of the way.

The man, whose name was Rusher, gave the alarm, and instantly Fuller and Gravety came rushing out to his assistance.

"Another one of them race track thugs," growled Fuller.

"What does he want here?" asked Rusher.

"Wants to steal a few tips, I suppose. I caught one of 'em around only a few days ago."

"Is that what you are?" demanded Gravety, catching Nick by the arm.

"Say, don't be hard on a feller," whined Nick, trying to jerk away.

"Answer me, are you from the tracks?"

"Yes," and Nick hung down his head.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes."

"What brought you here?"

"Nuthin'."

"That's a lie!" put in Fuller. "Come, tell the truth."

"I t'ought I could git a few tips on der races."

"I told you so," cried Fuller, triumphantly. "I believe I've seen this fellow around the paddock more than once!" growled Gravety.

As he spoke, he hauled off, intending to land a heavy blow on Nick's nose.

Nick dodged, and Gravety bumped up against him and the blow landed on Rusher's shoulder.

"Dat's where yer got left, see?" cried Nick.

Then with another jerk, he freed himself from Gravety's grasp.

"Hold him!"

"We must teach him a lesson before we let him go!"

The three men pounced upon Nick and threw him to the floor.

Gravety was foremost, and Nick at once realized what a powerful fellow the keeper of the pool room was.

But though he was playing a part, the great detective did not intend to let the others get the best of him.

He squirmed to one side and let out first with one fist and then with the other.

Biff! bang!

Gravety caught a blow in the jaw that sent him rolling several yards away:

Rusher received a bunch of fives in the nose which drew claret instantly.

Then Nick kicked himself from Fuller, who did his best to hold the supposed race track thug.

"Yer can't down Jerry McManus so easily; see?" howled Nick. "I kin give tips even if I ain't in de grand deal!"

And with this remark, Nick made for the steps.

Fuller was the first to recover, and he went after Nick.

But, by the time the owner of the mill reached the lower floor Nick was outside and speeding up the road.

He did not run in the direction of his horse and carriage, but took a side road.

Once out of reach, he took a position behind a tree, keeping an eye on the house.

A moment later Gravety came out with Fuller, and the two soon after drove away.

When Nick saw this, he went back to his own rig, and, securing it, followed the pair.

Gravety drove back to town and to Lee's livery stable.

Here he and Fuller remained with Lee for fully half an hour.

Nick saw that he would not be able to get close enough to hear what was said, for the men all seemed to be on guard.

After the meeting, Gravety walked over to his pool and billiard rooms, while Fuller hurried off in the opposite direction.

On leaving Gravety's trail for the time being, Nick hurried again to the telegraph office.

Here he sent a message to Chick in cipher, which, translated, read as follows:

"Find out if Michael Gravety was in New York part of this week, and, if so, how long. Claims to have a brother in the billiard and pool business. Might follow his movements from New York to this city."

This message off his mind, Nick returned to his hotel, and after a good, square meal, sat down to think matters over.

"Gravety is a shrewd one," he reasoned to himself, "and if he is guilty he is going to give me an up-hill battle to prove it."

"Whether he was here in Boston the night of the murder or not, it's ten to one he has an alibi all prepared to prove he was in New York."

"If he is the murderer, I must show him up and depend on Chick to break the so-called alibi."

"I know Chick will do his best, but if Gravety's brother is in the scheme, he will not find it easy work."

"Now, the matter resolves itself into just this: If Gravety killed Hasbrooke, why did he do it?"

"To imagine he did it just to rob the man, is absurd."

"He had another motive, and that motive was either hatred or fear."

"Now, he doesn't act quite as if he hated the dead man, that is, to any great extent."

"I am more inclined to believe he feared Hasbrooke."

"But, if so, what was the reason?"

"To this question there can be but one answer: Hasbrooke possessed Gravety's secret, a secret the pool room keeper wishes with all his heart to keep hidden.

"Now what was that secret?"

"Did Hasbrooke threaten to expose Gravety?"

"How long did Gravety speculate on the deed before he committed it?"

Nick Carter asked himself these questions and a dozen more, till it was two o'clock in the morning before he sought his bed.

On the following morning a brisk, chipper-looking young man left the hotel.

He wore a silk hat, pointed shoes, a button-hole bouquet, and carried a gold-headed cane.

With a swinging step he walked down State street, and as he passed many turned to gaze on him a second time.

"He's a regular dude, ain't he?"

"Where did he blow in from?"

At last the Crow Billiard and Pool Parlors were reached.

As the young man had surmised, they were now once more open.

Without hesitation, he walked inside, through the decorated swinging doors.

Michael Gravety stood behind the bar in thoughtful silence. At the farther end three men were drinking and talking horse.

"A cocktail, please," lisped the dapper young man. "Pleased to have you join me," he added.

The cocktail was compounded and passed over. For himself Gravety took a nip of his best brandy.

"This is the Crow, I believe," said the young man, after drinking a portion of the cocktail.

"That's the name, sir," was the pool room keeper's reply.

"I'm from New York, and I often heard of the place down there."

"Did you? Maybe you heard of it at Peter Gravety's place on Broadway."

"Yes, I did."

"I thought so." Gravety brightened a bit. "He's my brother."

"Ah, indeed! Very nice fellow, upon my word."

"Yes, Peter's a good sort."

"I'm quite a billiard and pool player," went on the dude. "Perhaps you've heard of me—Montrose Glenn."

"Don't know but what I have, Mr. Glenn," returned Gravety, although the name was entirely new to him.

He saw no use of offending a customer.

"Yes, I love the games—always did. By the way, they tell me you are quite a player."

"Oh, I play some," was Gravety's modest answer.

At that moment a short, stocky young man came in.

He was Gravety's new bartender and he was soon ready to take his employer's place.

"Suppose we play a game," went on the dapper young man, when he saw that Gravety was relieved from duty. "I would like to go back and tell your brother I had played with you."

Gravety was scarcely in the humor for playing, but he could give no good excuse for refusing, and so he consented to play.

The two went to the room in the rear.

Here three of the tables were ready for use.

The fourth was shoved into a corner and the cover was tied on tightly.

This table was the one upon which Lawrence Hasbrooke had been found murdered.

The dapper young man noticed the table, but said nothing concerning it.

"What shall it be?" asked Gravety.

"Billiards suit me."

"All right. We'll play on this table. It's the best of 'em."

The other men drifted in, and soon the dapper young man and the keeper of the resort began to play.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WIZARD OF THE CUE.

Of course the reader knows that the dapper young man was really Nick Carter in disguise.

Nick had his own reasons for visiting the Crow resort on this occasion, as will appear later.

He started the game, and in a few minutes both were "hard at it," as the saying goes.

It was not long before Gravety seemed to completely lose himself in the runs he made.

"He's a fiend on the subject of the game, that is certain," thought Nick. "All his pre-occupancy of mind is gone, and he is living just in the present."

Nick could play a fine game himself, and now he put forth every effort to beat Gravety.

It was utterly useless.

The billiard parlor keeper was a wonderful shot, his skill in handling the cue was truly marvelous.

He ran up his score with ease, and when he ran out Nick was left far behind.

"My gracious, but you are a devilish fine player!" cried Nick, as he adjusted an eye-glass to stare at Gravety.

"So they count me," was the modest reply. "But, say, your shots are by no means bad."

"Gravety is a regular wizard," put in one of the onlookers. "He holds the record here in Boston."

"Let us play another game," said Nick, and Gravety eagerly agreed.

"I like to play with a fellow that can

play," he whispered. "Some of those chaps want me to play with 'em and they make me tired."

So another game was begun, and this time Nick played with even more skill than before.

Once he led Gravety by forty points, but the keeper of the resort soon caught up and ran out, leaving Nick as far behind as before.

Then Nick pretended to get excited. He called for drinks and said he would bet Gravety ten dollars he could lead him on the third game.

Gravety took him up, and the game was played and lost.

During this play the other men had a companion call upon them.

This fellow had a horse outside, and soon the crowd drifted out to inspect the animal, leaving the great detective and Gravety alone.

As soon as they were out of sight, Nick went up to Gravety and caught him by the shoulder.

"Say, I want to talk to you," he whispered.

The pool room keeper started.

"What about?" he asked.

"I'm in a bit of trouble," returned the detective.

Gravety hesitated, and then dropped his cue and led the way to a side door behind a heavy curtain.

A narrow stairs ran up to a well-furnished parlor.

Here Gravety's friends occasionally played cards.

It was rumored that more than one young fellow had been swindled out of his money there, but the police had never investigated such reports.

"Now, what's the matter?" asked Gravety, as he closed the door after Nick.

"Can I trust you?" responded Nick, with a great show of hesitation.

"How trust me?"

"I had to leave New York in a hurry."

"Well?"

"I don't believe they have tracked me to Boston, but I am not sure about it."

"I don't catch on."

"Oh, pshaw, yes, you do."

"How do you know I do?"

"Pete said you would."

"What, my brother?" exclaimed Gravety.

"Exactly."

"Say, you don't mean he sent you to me?"

"That's it, Gravety."

"Really, I can't see why he should."

"And he said you would be O. K.," added Nick.

"That strikes me as strange. How O. K.?"

"Every way."

"Maybe you have got hold of the wrong Gravety."

"Evidently you still take me for a dude," responded Nick.

"You are not a dude, then?"

"Easy to show you I am not."

"Rush along the proof, then."

Gravety had hardly spoken when Nick whirled around on his heel.

He made several lightning changes and then again faced Gravety.

No longer was he a dude. The white and pink color had left his face, and instead were revealed features both dark and scarred.

"Holy smoke!"

"Do I look like a dude now?" asked Nick.

"Not much! Confound it all, who are you, anyway?"

"Can I trust you?"

"Yes."

"My name is Gerry Danvers."

"Danvers—Danvers?" repeated Gravety.

"The card sharp?"

"You have struck it," returned Nick.

He was delighted to think that Gravety should have heard of Gerry Danvers, whom Chick had landed in the Brooklyn jail only ten days previous.

"But, say, I heard through Pete that Danvers was nipped."

"I was nipped. But I got away."

"I see. How did you manage it?"

"Went out with an officer to look for bail, and downed my man on a back street."

"And then you lit out for here?"

"You've struck it."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Give me a hiding-place if I need one. Pete said you would do that for a consideration."

"Pete's taking too much on his shoulders," growled Gravety. "I never did such a thing before."

"Pete said you would be all right."

This reply seemed to disturb Gravety still more. He took a hasty turn up and down the room.

"See here, what has Pete been telling you?" he demanded, as he faced Nick.

"Telling me?"

"Yes—I mean about me?"

"I don't."

"It's a lie! You are trying to work on my feelings, but you can't do it." Gravety took a sudden step forward. "Do you know what I think you are?"

"What?"

"One of those notorious detectives."

"Hully-gee! Me a detective!"

"Yes."

"That's rich, Gravety."

"Talk as you please, I think you are a detective."

"Then you won't help me?"

"No. I want you to clear out, before I boot you out. Is that plain enough for you?"

Gravety talked as if he meant what he said.

He was a larger man than Nick, and as he strode forward he appeared ready to chew him up.

But Nick felt that Gravety was merely putting the screws on to try him.

He stuck his chin out suggestively and grinned at Gravety.

"Don't try ter bully me, child," he said, dropping into a favorite Bowery expression. "Yer talk so big yer mug kin hardly let der words out."

"I mean just what I say," said Gravety, stubbornly.

"Yer don't mean nuthin' of der kind. Just dare ter touch me an' you'll git it in der neck."

"Do you mean to say you can stand up against me?"

"If I can't I can do somethin' else."

"And what's that?"

"Never mind. Pete told me a thing er two."

"About what?"

"Never mind dat neider."

"You are talking through your hat," growled Gravety.

Evidently he was puzzled as to how best to proceed.

"An' you are talkin' ter make yer tongue go."

"What do you want, anyway?"

"Just wot I said, an' nuthin' more."

"Are the police after you?"

"I ain't sure, but dey may be."

"And you want me to hide you?"

"Yes, dat is, if I'm too close pressed; see?"

"I do."

"Of course I ain't goin' ter give up me freedom till I have ter."

"Well, I will hide you if it comes to the scratch. But I don't want to get into trouble

myself. I've had trouble enough around here lately."

"Somebody said dat somebody was stabbed down stairs."

"He was—killed."

"But dey got der bloke wot did it."

"They think they have."

"Don't yer know?"

"No, I was away to New York at the time, calling on Pete."

"I didn't see yer."

"I thought you were in jail."

"I was. But I called on Pete before I lit out fer here."

"Well, I was down to Pete's three days."

At that moment a bell on the wall rang.

"That's the barkeeper's call," went on Gravety. "I must go below now. Will you go down?"

"If it's all der same, I'll stay here a while and fix me make-up."

"Suit yourself," and Gravety left the room, closing the door after him.

Nick heard him descend the stairs, and then began a hasty examination of the apartment.

He did not hope to find much, but thought it a good plan to look around while he had the opportunity.

In one corner of the room was a writing-desk.

This was locked, but it did not take Nick long to pick the little lock.

The desk was filled with documents and letters of various kinds, very much in disorder.

Nick took up some of the documents at random and glanced at them hurriedly.

Then he looked at the letters.

Apparently there was nothing there of importance, and he was about to close the desk again when a portion of a letter in a crack caught his eye.

He drew it out, and the first thing which

attracted his attention was part of a signature at the bottom.

Nick studied the writing for several seconds, and made out the following:

"—ence Hasbroo—"

"The signature of Lawrence Hasbrooke, beyond a doubt," said Nick to himself. "It seems as if I was going to get at the bottom of this mystery at last."

He attempted to read the part of the letter in his possession, but hardly had he deciphered a line when he heard a step outside.

He shut the desk and thrust the torn sheet into his pocket; and the following instant Michael Gravety re-entered the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF AFFAIRS.

Gravety's face looked greatly disturbed as he came in.

For the instant Nick fancied the powerful fellow was going to spring at his throat.

"Just as I thought!" he growled.

"Wot's up?" asked Nick.

"The police have found out I have this room up here."

"Wot of it?"

"On account of that murder, they want to search the place."

"Den I guess I had better git out."

"Yes. Come with me and I'll show you another safe place from which you can come and go at will."

"In dis same building."

"No; on the other side of the city. It's just the sort of a hiding-place you want."

Gravety led the way below.

Then he went up again for a moment.

"If he looks in that desk, he will notice it is unlocked," thought Nick.

Soon the pool room keeper came down again.

"Now the police can search and welcome," he said. "Come on."

He led the way out by the door to the alleyway, and instead of walking to the street went back.

"Hullo!" thought Nick. "Perhaps he will show me the way he went when the murder was committed."

At the end of the alleyway was a high board fence standing against what looked like a solid brick wall.

Gravety went to one end of the fence, and, after a pause, succeeded in opening a small gate, or rather door.

Beyond was what might be called a basement window, leading into the building on the opposite side of the fence.

"Hully-gee! but dat's neat," remarked Nick.

"Come on, and be sure to latch the fence door behind you," was Gravety's only reply.

Nick did as ordered, and the two next proceeded through a brick passage-way scarcely ten feet wide and six feet high.

At the end of the passage-way was a flight of stone steps leading to the floor above.

They went up these, and through a dark hallway, and finally emerged, after walking through a second alleyway, upon a narrow street lined with factories and wholesale warehouses.

"Dat's a neat turn, Gravety."

"Yes, it is. But come on. I must get back and see what the police are up to."

On they went up one street and down another, until they came in sight of the Charles River, opposite the Navy Yard.

Then Gravety showed the way into a large building standing partly on the street and partly on a dock.

"Come up and I'll show you my rooms here," he said. "You can have the run of them as long as you please on Pete's account."

They passed inside and up a rough wooden stairs.

To the left of the landing above was a locked room, which Gravety opened.

Once inside, the pool room keeper showed the way to a second room, which appeared to be built directly in the center of the first.

"Step in and I'll light the gas," said Gravety, and paused to get a match from his box.

Nick stepped into the apartment as requested.

Hardly had he done so when Gravety, in the dark, pulled a sandbag from his pocket.

He struck the detective a savage blow on the head, and Nick went down as if shot.

Gravety held the sandbag for a second blow, but this was unnecessary.

Nick was unconscious.

Lighting a pocket lamp, Gravety proceeded to go through Nick's pockets with all possible haste.

He found but little outside of Nick's jewelry, a roll of bank bills, and the scrap of the letter.

"What! that letter!" gasped Gravety, as he started back. "I thought I had destroyed it totally.

"This proved the fellow to be what I suspected—a detective.

"Now there is no need to communicate with Pete to find out about him.

"It was a lucky thing I thought to bring him here to hold him for a while.

"For two cents I would slit his throat from ear to ear!" he hissed.

"He deserves death. I will teach all the hounds of the law that I am not to be downed.

"How did he get on my track? Is it possible that he has been following the case up from New York?"

For several minutes Gravety gloated over his victim. Then he moved toward the door.

"I'll question him before I put him on the list," he muttered. "I'll find out from him if there are others on the track."

He went out and locked the door after him.

In a few minutes he was on his way back to the Crow.

How long Nick lay unconscious he could not tell.

When he came to his senses, all was pitch-dark about him.

His head ached as if it would split, and there was an ugly lump back of his left ear.

"I'm in luck that Gravety didn't finish me," was his first thought.

He staggered to his feet and ran his hands over his forehead.

At first he could not think clearly, but gradually everything in his brain righted itself.

Then he realized how he had played into the enemy's hands, and he was much put out in consequence.

"And yet they call me a great detective," he murmured. "Why, even Wick and Patsy could do better, not to mention Chick."

But Nick was not entirely to blame in this matter, as the reader knows.

Gravety had only thought to hold him until he could communicate with his brother in New York.

It was the torn letter alone which had revealed the true state of things to the pool room keeper.

Nick put his hand into his pocket to bring out his pocket lantern.

"Humph! he took the trouble to go through me."

There was now nothing left to do but to feel his way around in the dark, and this he did.

The examination was most unsatisfactory.

He was in a room not over ten feet square. All the walls were of heavy planking, per-

fectly smooth, excepting around the frame of the door.

The floor was also of heavy planking, well put down.

What the ceiling was composed of was not possible to tell.

He sprang up as high as he was able, but could touch nothing.

Nick felt satisfied from the intense darkness that he was in a room within a room.

That being so, among other things it would most likely be useless to call for outside assistance, even had he been so inclined, which was not the case.

"A prisoner, without so much as a knife to assist me in gaining my liberty.

"I wonder how long I have been here, and how long it will be before Gravety returns?"

An hour went by, and then another.

Growing tired of a wait that seemed ten times longer than it was, Nick tried all of his strength on the door. The barrier creaked and groaned, but refused to give way.

Another hour went by, and tired of standing up, Nick sat down on the floor.

The afternoon dragged by slowly, and then by the faint sounds of whistles which reached the detective's ears, he knew it was six o'clock.

He was growing both hungry and thirsty, yet nothing was at hand to satisfy these inner cravings.

Another couple of hours and the great detective's throat was so dry that he could scarcely make a sound.

The room seemed filled with a fine dust, and the slightest movement set this in motion.

At last Nick heard a faint sound, coming from the side of the room opposite to the door.

Then came a flash of light, and by its rays Nick beheld an open panel a couple of feet above his head.

In the opening appeared the head and arms of Gravety.

In one hand the pool room keeper held his lantern, and in the other a revolver.

"Well, how are you making out?" asked the rascal, coolly.

"I'm not making out," was Nick's calm reply.

"I thought you wouldn't—never had any one break out of this little trap."

"Then you have had other prisoners, eh?" returned the great detective.

"Well, I don't mind telling you that I have."

"And I suppose they will never be heard from again."

"Never mind what you suppose," said Gravety. "I've brought you a little feed. Catch hold."

As the man spoke, he lowered his pistol and then dropped a light tin pail into the room. Nick, who was near, caught the pail.

"There is nothing there but water-soaked bread," continued the pool room keeper, with a grin. "You see, I can't afford to board you any better."

"I don't know why you brought me anything."

"Oh, I'm not a bad sort—when you get to know me. Now tell me, who are you?"

"A fellow in a box."

"Come, no nonsense. What is your name?"

"Gerry Danvers."

"I tell you such nonsense won't go any longer!" howled Gravety, in a rage. "I want your real name."

"What do you want to do with it?"

"See here."

Gravety raised his revolver and pointed it at Nick's head.

"Give it to me straight, or——"

"Or what?"

"You'll get it straight—from this pistol."

Gravety's face was full of evil passion, and it was plain to see he meant what he said.

"Well, since you are so pressing, Gravety, I don't mind telling you. I am Nick Carter, detective, of New York City."

"Nick Carter! I have often heard of you."

"Thanks. I presume I must consider that a compliment."

"You fancy I murdered Hasbrooke."

"Have I said so?"

"Never mind, that is what you think."

"One thing is sure—I believe Paul Pemberton innocent."

"So do I."

At this reply Nick was just a bit surprised.

"Perhaps you know he is innocent," he said, suggestively.

"No, I don't. I was in New York at the time of the murder, and I can't say who killed Hasbrooke. But I'll tell you one thing. You shall not have the chance of fastening that crime on me."

"How can I do that if you can prove an alibi?"

"Oh, you detectives have a way of working around a thing. But I am too old a bird to be caught. Now go on and eat your feed if you are hungry. I'll come around again to-morrow and have it out with you."

And with this remark, Gravety disappeared, closing the slide after him, and leaving the great detective once more to himself in the utter darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIBERTY FOR MORE THAN ONE.

Gravety's rather abrupt departure surprised Nick.

Certainly the pool room keeper had come to the place with some further object than

the mere bringing of the pail of water-soaked bread.

"It is barely possible that he was interrupted by some sign outside," thought Nick. "Perhaps he is afraid some one else is on his track."

After Gravety's departure all became as silent as a tomb. Nick reckoned it must be midnight or close to it.

He waited for a while and then, feeling a worse thirst than ever, opened the tin pail.

As Gravety had said, it was filled with soaked bread.

Nick took a very small piece and tasted it carefully.

It had a peculiar sweetish flavor.

"Poison!" Nick muttered to himself. "Did he suppose I could be taken in as easily as that?"

Emptying the pail of its contents, Nick sat down once more to think.

Then an idea came to him, and arising, he took the pail and walked over to where the panel in the planking was situated.

Turning the pail upside down, he stood on it, and by this means was enabled to barely reach the panel.

He felt over its entire surface with minute care, and came in contact with the turned ends of several wire nails.

Loosening the handle from the pail, he fashioned it into a rude pick, and with this dug at the nails until he had the turned ends loose.

Then he straightened them out, and with one of his shoes, using the heel as a hammer, drove the nail outward, shoving them clear through with the wire.

The panel was now shaky, and a little additional work served to make it slip from its resting-place.

In a moment Nick was up into the opening thus afforded. It was sufficiently large to admit of the passage of his body, and out

he came sprawling into the apartment beyond.

Here it was also dark, but a faint light at one end took him to the door.

The lock upon this was but an ordinary one and a vigorous shove from the great detective's shoulder caused the door to burst wide open.

Nick was now free, and lost no time in making his way down into the street.

An empty cab was rattling by, and into this he sprang and was driven to his hotel.

Here he paid the cabby with some change which he had secreted about him, and changed his disguise to that of a countryman in Boston to see the sights.

He now felt certain that Gravety was the guilty man, but how to fasten the murder upon him was a question.

"Unless Chick discovers something in New York it will be up-hill work and no mistake," said Nick to himself.

Nick went over to the telegraph office, but no message from his first assistant was there.

Nick next directed his steps toward the Crow resort.

He found the place locked up and not a soul was in sight.

While he stood around the front of the place the policeman on the beat came along.

"Well, friend, what's the best word?" he asked.

"By gosh! thair ain't no best word!" returned Nick.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter enough. This air the Crow billiard parlors, ain't they?"

"Yes."

"Wall, I wuz here a couple o' hours ago an' left my gold-headed cane in the gosh-blamed place—the one Samanthy gave me—an' now the shop is shet up."

"Oh, don't let that worry you. Come around in the morning."

"I'm goin' back ter him on the fust train, officer. I want ter git thet cane now."

"I don't see how you are going to do it."

"Whar does the man wot keeps this shop live?"

"Gravety lives over on St. James Avenue, near West Chester."

"Know the number, officer?"

The officer said he did, and gave it.

"But I don't believe you will find Gravety home now," he added.

"Why not?"

"Because I saw him take a cab for South Boston not over an hour ago."

"Gee shoo! Then I'm out, hey?"

"Better take a later train in the morning—if the cane is so valuable. Or else have the cane sent to you."

"Who drove him away? Maybe I kin find out if he's went home yet."

"He got into Dooley's cab. He generally stands over on that corner, but he's not back yet."

And then the policeman went on his way, thinking to leave the countryman to figure out matters to suit himself.

Nick at once trudged off to the corner. He looked up and down the street and just then a cab hove in sight.

It came to a stand, and the driver sang out, instantly:

"Want a cab, boss?"

"Be your name Dooley?"

"That's my handle, yes."

"Did you jest drive Mr. Gravety away?"

"I did."

"I want ter see Mr. Gravety very much."

"All right; jump in."

"Kin yeou take me to him?"

"I can."

"Whar is he?"

"Over to a place in South Boston."

"He ain't gone home yet?"

"I reckon not. Hurry up, if you want to catch him."

This just suited Nick, and he at once entered the cab, and off they rattled toward the South Boston bridge.

The river passed, they drove along Broadway a distance of several blocks.

Then they turned into a narrow side street and finally halted in front of an old brick house, all the shutters of which were tightly closed.

"Here you are, uncle."

"Thank yer."

"One dollar, please."

"Gee shoo! Ez much ez that?"

"Regular fare is a dollar an' a half. I'm knocking off the half as a favor to you."

"Give yer fifty cents."

"A dollar is the lowest."

With much grumbling, Nick paid the amount.

The cabby at once mounted to his seat again and drove off.

Nick knew he might be trying to fool him, but the great detective was more willing to take the risk than he was to detain the fellow.

From behind the shutters in the second story of the house streamed a bright light.

Nick caught the shadows of several persons moving about, but could identify no one.

At the risk of being discovered and taken for a burglar, Nick ascended the front stoop of the house.

The door was locked, but Nick soon opened it.

Then with extreme caution he entered the building.

All was dark and silent on the ground floor and in the basement.

From overhead came the murmur of voices in animated conversation.

Drawing his revolver, Nick crept up the stairs and along the darkened hallway.

He had almost reached the door of the

front chamber, when it was flung wide open, leaving a stream of light into the hall.

"Stop!" he heard a voice cry. "Stop, or you are a dead man!"

And then a figure, which had sprung into the doorway, came to a halt.

"You think you are smart, but you are not as smart as you think," went on the voice within the room. "Come back, or as sure as I am standing here, I'll put a bullet through your head."

The man in the hallway paused and then slowly re-entered the apartment.

"Now shut the door and throw up your hands," was the next command, and then the door banged shut, and for the instant Nick heard no more.

But what he had heard and saw was surprising.

In spite of his disguise, he had recognized the man who had sought to escape from the room as no other than Chick.

How his first assistant had reached Boston and gotten himself into such a fix he could not imagine.

But here he was, and in the power of the man within the room.

Who Chick's captor was was also a mystery.

His voice was totally unfamiliar to Nick.

As this ran through his mind, there was a cry and a heavy fall, and then the crashing down of a door.

It happened almost immediately after the hall door was closed.

A pistol-shot rang out, and a groan of pain. Realizing at once that Chick had made a dash for liberty and had been wounded, Nick bounded forward and threw open the door before him.

He beheld Chick prostrate between the front room and the one next to it. He lay partly on the carpet and partly on the door, which had fallen down, and had blood all over his face.

Not far away stood Gravety, a smoking pistol in his hand. Nick looked around for the man who had been speaking, but saw no one else.

"Stop, Gravety! You are my prisoner," cried Nick.

The man stared at Nick in amazement. Then as quick as lightning, he dropped behind a center table and opened fire on Nick.

Crack! crack! crack!

The man behind the table fired twice, and Nick fired once. The first had the advantage, but neither was hit. Then with a bound like lightning, the man behind the table sprang over Chick's body and into the next room.

Nick hated to allow Gravety to get away, but could not bear to think of leaving Chick while he was suffering.

"I'll be back in a moment, my boy," he said, and dashed after his quarry.

But the back of the house was totally dark, and there was no telling in what direction Gravety had disappeared. Nick made as thorough a search as possible and then returned to Chick, who, he found, was unconscious.

He took him in his arms, and after binding up his head, carried him below into the street.

A cab was procured, and a man who chafed along at the same time, readily agreed to take charge of Chick during the drive to the Tremont Hotel.

This settled upon, the cab drove off, and Nick went back to the house to trace up the man he was so anxious to capture. He would have liked to have questioned Chick, but his assistant was in no condition to be interviewed. Had he been, much of the mystery surrounding Lawrence Hasbrooke's death would have been cleared up on the spot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WRONG MAN.

Nick entered the house by the rear on leaving Chick.

He went about his work in utter silence, and walked through the kitchen as lightly as a cat.

Presently he paused, for he felt certain that somebody was close to him.

He put out his hand and it came in contact with a man's arm.

Instantly the other man wheeled about and struck Nick a savage blow in the cheek.

The great detective retaliated by grabbing his antagonist where he had touched him.

At once a fierce struggle ensued, and both went to the floor.

They rolled over and over in the dark, upsetting chairs and half a dozen other things.

Nick found his opponent a powerful fellow, but he was now on his mettle and meant to come out on top.

He managed, after hard work, to release himself and dodged a blow from the other's fist.

Then his own iron-like fist shot out.

It landed on his antagonist's forehead and stunned him.

Before he could recover, Nick hit the man a second time, and then he lay still, unable to move.

Leaping to his feet, the great detective held his pistol in readiness and struck a match.

A gas jet was close at hand and this he lit.

The man on the floor was coming to, and attempted to arise.

"Stay where you are, unless you want me to wing you," exclaimed Nick, and leveled the pistol suggestively.

"Curse you!" hissed the man.

The tone of voice completely surprised Nick.

It was not that of Gravety, but of the man he had heard talking to Chick up-stairs.

And yet the man before him looked like Gravety.

Suddenly the truth burst upon the great detective.

There were two men, probably brothers, who looked enough alike to be mistaken for each other!

This was not the man he had been dealing with, the keeper of the Crow resort.

It was the other fellow.

"Can he be the Pete Gravety from New York?" Nick asked himself.

He soon answered that question.

"Well, Gravety, how do you like being a prisoner?"

"Curse you!" was the reply. "Who in the devil are you?"

"A fellow coming from New York ought to know me pretty well, Gravety."

"Are you from New York?"

"Yes."

"Then you must be a partner of that other detective."

"You have struck it."

"That other man was Chick Carter."

"Exactly."

"You can't be Nick Carter."

"Why not?"

"Because Mike said——"

Pete Gravety broke off short.

"What did Mike, your brother, say?"

"Never mind."

"I'll tell you what he said. He said he had me a prisoner."

Pete Gravety would not reply to this, but Nick saw that he had struck the truth.

"Where is Mike now?"

"I don't know."

"You lie, Pete."

"All right, have it your own way."

"Is he in this house?"

"Find out for yourself."

"I will," returned Nick.

In a trice, he had Pete Gravety handcuffed. Then he pitched him into a kitchen closet and locked the door, shoving the key into his pocket.

"Now I reckon he's good for ten or fifteen minutes," said the great detective to himself.

Nick's next move was to ransack the building from cellar to garret.

He soon discovered that no one was around. Evidently the house belonged to some family that had gone away for the summer.

He found a number of things belonging to the two Gravetys, but nothing which would incriminate them so far as the Hasbrooke murder was concerned.

A window in the back parlor was open, and Nick came to the conclusion that Michael Gravety had taken his departure through this, but whether previous to the struggle up-stairs or not he could not determine.

Satisfied that he had missed nothing, Nick went below and brought Pete Gravety from the kitchen closet.

"Well, how did you make out?" asked the prisoner.

"Very well, Gravety."

"I'll bet you didn't find Mike."

"No, but I'll soon have him."

"Maybe you will," was the prisoner's answer, with a sneer.

"By the way, Gravety," Nick went on, calmly. "How long ago is it since you left the West?"

Gravety started.

That movement slight as it was, betrayed him.

"From the West?" he faltered.

"Yes."

"I—I was never West."

"You are a cheerful liar, Gravety. Either you were West or your brother, and I am inclined to think it was you."

"I was never West."

"Another thing, you are quite a billiard player, are you not?"

"I'm a crack player, but what in blazes has that got to do with matters on hand?" growled Pete Gravety.

"Quite a little, my man. You are an all-around sport, too."

"Yes, I'm a sport."

"In the West you were known as Cuey, or the Wizard of the Cue," went on Nick.

Pete Gravety turned as pale as death.

"Who—what——" he stammered, and glared at Nick.

"You once killed a Mexican named Juan Cross, generally called Two-fingered Juan."

"You are a—a devil!" burst from Pete Gravety's lips.

"No, only a New York detective, Gravety. Come now, you might as well own up."

"You have been shadowing me—you and your cursed partner, or whatever he is."

"I've been tracing you and your brother up a bit, that's all."

"Your partner followed me from New York——"

"He did."

"You put him on my track down there."

"Right again."

"What was your object? I had nothing to do with—with any affair up here."

"You don't tell it straight."

"I swear I didn't."

"You helped your brother to kill Hasbrooke."

"I didn't. I'll take my oath on it."

"Well, you stood ready to help him prove an alibi."

Nick looked Pete Grayety sharply in the eyes as he spoke, and the detective's prisoner looked much worried.

"Mike's my only brother. You would help your brother out of trouble if you could."

"That argument doesn't go in this case, Gravety. If your previous record was clear, it might. But you yourself are a murderer. You murdered Juan Cross in the Big Buck Pass, robbed him of his gold and of his long dagger, and that is the very dagger you let your brother have when he started out to kill Lawrence Hasbrooke."

Pete Gravety's teeth fairly shook in his head. The memory of the past rolled up before his mental vision, and once more the horror of that scene took possession of him.

"It's false!" he shrieked. "It's false! Mercy! Don't lock me up! Don't let them hang me!"

As if shaking with palsy, he dropped on his knees before Nick, brought to bay after years of security from the penalty of his great crime. The great drops of sweat stood out on his forehead.

"If you expect any mercy at all from me, Gravety, answer all of my questions and answer them truthfully," was the detective's stern response.

"I will! I will! I'll tell you everything!" groaned the terror-stricken prisoner.

CHAPTER X.

REVELATION AND CAPTURE.

"Where has your brother gone?"

"I don't know."

"You have no idea?"

"Most likely he has gone to the Crow."

"If he leaves the Crow, where would he most likely go next?"

"Down to Bridgeport."

"Why would he go to Bridgeport?"

"We have a number of old friends there."

"Who are they?"

"Jim Longley, Matt Oughers, Dick Bowery and half a dozen others."

"Old New York toughs?"

"Yes."

"They have a hang-out there?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Up opposite the old Grem-Poultney Works."

"Your brother spoke of going there?"

"He said he might go there, if things got too hot for him here. But he thought he could easily clear himself."

"He was going to prove an alibi?"

"Yes."

"Who was going to swear to it?"

"He was going to get a couple of Salvation Army men to clear him."

"You mean get them to swear falsely?"

"No."

"On the night he was at work up here, I went to the Salvation Army meeting and passed myself off as Mike—but I didn't know he was going to kill Hasbrooke," added Pete Gravety, hastily.

"I see. And he was going to prove he was at the meeting on the very evening he was up here laying for Hasbrooke."

"That's it."

"But you don't talk as he does. Your voices are different."

"That's where he thought he was coming out ahead. I can imitate his voice to perfection. I used to be on the variety stage before I went into the billiard and pool business."

And Pete Gravety gave a perfect imitation of his brother's voice as Nick had heard him talk at the Crow.

"Was your brother down in New York at all?"

"Yes, but only for a few hours, just long enough to let a number of people see him."

"Then he came right back to Boston?"

"Yes."

"Why did he take Hasbrooke's life?"

"Because he had to."

"Had to?"

"Yes. He didn't want to kill the man."

"But he attacked him."

"After a quarrel. Hasbrooke had certain papers which Mike wanted."

"What did those paper contain?"

"The particulars of several race-track deals. Mike was in for making a pot of money."

"In a shady way?"

"Yes."

"And Hasbrooke discovered the game?"

"He did, and was going to expose Mike."

"And that would have ruined your brother?"

"It would not only have ruined him, but it would have sent him to prison."

"Where are those papers now?"

"Mike has them."

"How was it Hasbrooke happened to be at the Crow?"

"Mike sent him a note to come. He told Hasbrooke if he would keep quiet all should be made right again."

"But Hasbrooke remained at the Crow very late with Pemberton."

"So he did, but only because he wanted to play pool with Pemberton."

"Where was your brother at that time?"

"In the alleyway, waiting for Hasbrooke to leave the pool room."

"Do you know if Hasbrooke and Pemberton came out together?"

"No, Mike said Pemberton left first. Then he skipped in to have it out with Hasbrooke."

This story sounded plausible enough, and Nick was inclined to believe it true. Subsequent events proved that Pete Gravety, in his terror, had made no misstatements.

Nick realized that already valuable time had been lost.

"Come, Gravety. We'll take a little stroll, and if you value your life, don't try to get away."

Out on the street Nick managed, after walking several blocks, to find a policeman.

He turned Pete Gravety over to his care, cautioning him to see that his prisoner should not escape.

Then Nick made his way to the hotel with all possible haste.

He found Chick sitting up, his head wrapped in bandages.

"I'm all right, Nick," said Chick. "Tell me how you made out."

In as few words as possible, Nick did so.

"Pete Gravety tells a straight story, Nick. I reckon he confessed because he knew I had been tracing up his record."

"There is something in that."

"I wish I could go with you. But I'm afraid I shall be laid up for several days."

"I'm satisfied that you escaped with your life," murmured Nick. "It was a close shave."

Having satisfied himself that Chick was out of danger, the great detective at once set to work to capture Michael Gravety.

With the aid of a cab, a rapid visit was paid to the Crow resort.

It was found that Gravety had not been there.

Then Nick visited the house on St. James Avenue.

Gravety had just left, taking with him a valise full of clothing and all his jewelry and ready cash.

"He is going to stand from under, in case a crash comes," thought Nick, grimly.

In the name of the authorities, Nick took possession of Gravety's room, and had them thoroughly searched.

By this means many of the pool room keeper's shady transactions were brought to light.

It was learned that he was not only a race-track swindler, but a thief as well, having on more than one occasion robbed men while they were in an intoxicated condition at his resort.

"A good man to round up, that's certain," thought Nick. "He and his brother are a great team of rascals."

From one of the men in the house Nick learned a bit of news which explained the peculiar bloody track on the pool room wall.

Gravety's second finger was stiff and when he put the others down, that generally stuck out straight.

"His hand will fit that mark first-rate, and that will bring him right home to the deed, especially if his boot also shows that nail which made those deep scratches," argued Nick.

Early on the following morning, Nick took the first train for Bridgeport.

Arriving in that city, he visited the chief of police, and the two held a conference which lasted the best part of half an hour.

At the conclusion two officers in plain clothing were detailed to assist the great detective.

One of these men knew the way to the old factory Pete Gravety had mentioned.

A careful inspection of the works proved that they were deserted. But there were fresh footprints in the dirt of the yard, showing that several men had recently been there.

"These may be the marks of tramps," said Nick. "But we will stay right here until to-morrow and see if there is anything in Pete Gravety's story."

The party of three had supplied themselves with a lunch, and after eating this they made themselves comfortable for a smoke, when suddenly Nick, who was on the watch, held up his hand.

"Three men coming this way," he whispered. "Scatter, and remember the signal."

The next instant he had disappeared behind a lot of old machinery, out of use.

The two officers with him promptly vanished also, and the old works looked deserted.

Then steps were heard outside, and three men entered. Two were young fellows and looked tough. The third appeared to be an old man, and wore a heavy black beard.

"Here we are, Mike. Now you can lay off that beard if you want to," exclaimed one of the toughs.

"I'm devilish glad to do it, Dick," was the reply, and then the beard and a wig were taken off, revealing the features and head of Michael Gravety.

"Kind of hot, eh?" put in the third man.

"Yes, Jim, I'll be glad when I can do without them, I can tell you."

"What are you going to do when you leave Bridgeport, Mike?"

"Go West?"

"Out on Pete's old stamping ground?"

"Not much. Do you think I want to be hauled up for some of his doings?"

And Gravety laughed coarsely.

"How about poor Pete?"

"He'll have to take care of himself. If he hadn't made such a mess of it in New York I might have been all right."

"Yes, but your prisoner got away from you."

"I believe that other chap from New York set him free. He was a corker."

"I'll have to tell Chick that," thought Nick, "it will make him feel better right away."

Without waiting longer, now that he was

sure of his man, he gave the signal previously arranged upon.

In exactly two seconds each of the three men found himself covered by a brace of revolvers.

On seeing Nick, Gravety's courage forsook him. At heart he was as big a coward as his brother.

"What does this mean?" he asked, as a last bluff.

"No need to ask, Gravety," returned Nick. "Hold out your hands for the bracelets. You may be able to beat me at billiards, but I can go you one better on a game like this."

There is but scant space to describe what followed. The three men attempted to resist, but were speedily overcome and handcuffed, and later on lodged in jail.

A few months later Michael Gravety was tried and hung for the murder of Lawrence Hasbrooke.

His brother Pete and the toughs from Bridgeport are in prison and likely to remain there for a number of years to come.

Paul Pemberton will never forget the great service Nick and Chick did him when they downed the Wizard of the Cue and saved him from the gallows. Like thousands of others, he thinks the two detectives the greatest the world has ever seen.

THE END.

The next number will contain "A Swindler in Petticoats; or, Nick Carter's Pretty Prisoner."

Nick Carter Weekly

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